IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (cancelled)

2.   (Currently Amended) A ~~In a~~ retail network comprising:

at least one district network including a district node and multiple regional networks, each having a regional node and multiple points of sale, and

a system for processing orders received from a client terminal ~~capable of~~ sending a request providing indication of an item being ordered and indication of a point of sale selected for delivery of the item, together with an identifier of a customer, the system comprising:

an order support server causing the client terminal to produce a graphical user interface identifying goods available in a regional network that includes the selected point of sale,

if the item is available in the regional network, the graphical user interface enabling the customer to place an order for delivery of the item within the regional network to the selected point of sale,

if the item is not available in the regional network, the order support server determining a first node outside of the regional network, at which the item is available, and enabling the customer to place an order for delivery of the item from the first node to the selected point of sale,

the order processing system further comprising a first server associated with the first node and configured for receiving the request if the item is not available in the regional network, the first server being further configured for arranging a delivery path for delivery of the item from the first node to the selected point of sale.

3.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the first server is configured for routing the delivery path via the regional node of the regional network.

4.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 3, wherein the first server is configured for routing the delivery path via the district node.

5.   (Currently amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 4, wherein the first server is configured for scheduling delivery of the item from the first node to the district node.

6.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 5, wherein the first server is further configured for scheduling delivery of the item from the district node to the regional node.

7.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 6, wherein the first server is further configured for scheduling delivery of the item from the regional node to the selected point of sale.

8.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 4, comprising a second server configured for arranging a return path for return of an item returned by a customer from a point of sale selected by the customer for return to a selected node.

9.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 8, wherein the second server is configured for routing the return path via the regional node.

10.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 9, wherein the second server is configured for routing the return path via the district node.

11.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the regional node is configured for being supplied with merchandise purchased from a vendor in a region covered by the regional retail network corresponding to the regional node.

12.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 11, wherein the regional node is controlled to arrange a purchased merchandise path from the regional node to a node selected for delivery of the purchased merchandise.

13.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 12, wherein the purchased merchandise path is routed via the district node.

14.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the district node is configured to provide a two-directional transfer of goods between the regional node and selected node.

15.   (Currently amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the first node is configured for storing products of a particular type.

16.   (Withdrawn) In a retail network comprising at least one district network including a district node and multiple regional networks, each having a regional node and multiple points of sale, a method of processing orders received from a client terminal capable of

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sending a request providing indication of an item being purchased and indication of a point of sale selected for delivery of the item, together with an identifier of a purchaser, the method comprising the steps of:

configuring a selected node of the retail network located outside a regional network having the point of sale selected for delivery, for receiving the request if the item is not available in the regional network, and

controlling the selected node for arranging a delivery path from the selected node to the point of sale selected for delivery.

17.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of routing the delivery path via the district node and the regional node of the regional network having the point of sale selected for delivery.

18.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of arranging a return path from a point of sale selected for return of a delivered item to a selected node.

19.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of routing the return path via the regional node and the district node.

20.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of configuring the district node for providing a two-directional transfer of goods between the selected node and the regional node.

21. (Withdrawn) A retail network for enabling customers to pick up ordered goods at a selected point of sale, comprising:

at least one district network for providing retail operations within a district, the district network including multiple regional networks for providing retail operations within respective regions of the district, and at least one district distribution node for providing transfer of goods to the regional networks,

each of the regional networks including multiple points of sales and a regional distribution node responsive to customer's orders for supplying the ordered goods to the points of sales.

22. (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 21, further comprising at least one specialty node for providing operations with a particular type of merchandise.

23. (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 22, wherein said at least one district distribution node provides transfer of goods between said at least one specialty node and the regional networks.

24. (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 23, wherein the goods transferred between said at least one specialty node and the regional networks include a retail stream of goods representing merchandise ordered by the customers and a wholesale stream of goods representing merchandise transferred to the regional distribution node to replenish stocks.

25. (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 24, wherein the retail stream is assigned with priority higher than priority of the wholesale stream.

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26.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 24, wherein the district distribution node has a routing mechanism for routing the wholesale stream transferred from the specialty node in accordance with a destination address identifying the regional distribution node.

27.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 24, wherein the district distribution node has a repackaging mechanism for removing goods ordered by a customer from a container packaged at the specialty node and packaging the goods into a container addressed to a regional network including a point of sale selected by the customer.

28.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 23, wherein the regional distribution node is configured for being supplied with merchandise purchased from a supplier within a respective region, and for being supplied by the district distribution node.

29.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 28, wherein a two-directional stream of goods is provided between the regional distribution node and the district distribution node.

30.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 28, wherein a two-directional stream of goods is provided between the regional distribution node and the specialty distribution node.

31.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 21, wherein multiple district networks are provided, and each of the district networks includes a gateway mechanism for providing transfer of goods between the district networks.

32.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 21, wherein the points of sale includes stationary points and mobile points.

33.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 21, wherein a point of sale includes a section for enabling the customers to pick up the ordered goods delivered from the respective regional node, and a section for selling merchandise available in stock.

34.   (Withdrawn) A retail network for providing retail operations, comprising:

at least one district network for providing retail operations within a district, the district network including multiple regional networks for providing retail operations within respective regions of the district, and at least one district distribution node for providing transfer of goods between the regional networks, each of the regional networks including multiple points of sale and a regional distribution node for supplying the points of sales,

two-directional transfer of goods being provided between the regional distribution node and said at least one district distribution node.

35.   (Withdrawn) The network of claim 34, further comprising at least one specialty node for providing retail operations with a particular type of merchandise.

36.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 35, wherein said at least one district distribution node provides two-directional transfer of goods between said at least one specialty node and the regional distribution node.

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37.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 34, wherein multiple district networks are provided, the retail network further including a gateway mechanism for providing two-directional transfer of goods between the district networks.

38.   (Withdrawn) The retail network of claim 34, wherein the district distribution node has a buffer mechanism for buffering selected items before delivery to regional distribution nodes.

39.   (Currently Amended) The network ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the order support server is responsive to a search of a required item performed using the graphical user interface of the client terminal, by identifying the first node outside of the regional network.

40.   (Currently Amended) The network ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the first server is responsive to the order from the customer by performing a routing protocol including producing an address field for delivery of the ordered item from a source to a destination via a designated intermediate node, the address field includes a source address and a destination address.

41.   (Currently Amended) The network ~~system~~ of claim 40, further comprising an intermediate server associated with the intermediate node for replacing the destination address assigned to the item with a destination address of a next point in a delivery path of the item.

42.   (Currently Amended) The network ~~system~~ of claim 2, wherein the first server is responsive to the order from the customer by performing a routing protocol including a first link

for delivery the ordered item from the first node to the district node, and a second link for delivery the ordered item from the district node to the regional network.

43.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 42, wherein the district node provides transfer of the ordered item together with transfer of goods directed to the regional network for replenishing stocks of regional nodes in the regional network.

44.   (Currently Amended) The <u>network</u> ~~system~~ of claim 2, further comprising a local computer associated with the selected point of sale and a regional computer associated with a regional node,

wherein the local computer provides the customer with information that requires a first bandwidth, and the regional computer provides the customer with information that requires a second bandwidth more narrow than the first bandwidth.